

## **Lane Preference**

As to my idea of right lane travel when three or more lanes go in same direction on an interstate, there is almost always the shoulder pull-off lane to change into in the event that something shows up in your driving lane unexpectedly. Last summer I was in heavy traffic in the center lane and saw a 5" piece of PVC (eight foot long) rolling across my lane. Because of traffic on both sides I could only move the motorhome about a foot to avoid hitting it with the front tires. It hit the dual rear tires and catapulted off my towed Saturn's front bumper into other traffic. In retrospect it would have been nice to know there was a free lane to my right to "dive" into and avoid the damage.

On the subject of "which lane to drive in", we are in an area where my experience has been a good teacher. Normally, tooling along in the slow curb lane makes good sense. Where I dislike the advice is when approaching or going around the bypass of a major city in heavy traffic.

The point made by many is that if you are in the second lane you can be "sandwiched" between two passing trucks. No one will argue that it is a little unnerving when an 18 wheeler blasts by on each side.

The first reason I drive in the second lane, when traveling at a reasonable speed, is that the curb lane frequently becomes an "exit only" lane forcing a through traveler to execute a lane change to the left in heavy traffic. Now we all know that as soon as you hit the left turn signal, it is interpreted by the six cars behind you to mean, "Speed Up" and they block your ability to shift lanes. Unfortunately sometimes the only way the lane change can be made is to force the issue by "leaning" to the left while signaling. Even if that is avoidable there is always that little car you did not spot in the convex mirror. The second reason for second lane driving is that it allows you to avoid the traffic entering the freeway trying to merge. Atlanta is a good example of both these situations. A third valid reason, particularly if you are not familiar with the area, is the road split or a left exit. If you are in the second lane you only have one less lane to move to the left. In heavy traffic a one-mile warning is frequently not enough for multiple lane changes. Nashville is a good example of a city where the road splits multiple times. I believe that lane changes should be kept to a minimum.

Of course if the heavy traffic times can be avoided that is the best solution. If there is a chance the interstate may become a rush hour parking lot, I personally prefer to exit and choose my parking place for dinner or a nap. Anyway it works for me, but that doesn't make it right for everyone.

Opposing viewpoints are always welcome!